

Talking about past – grammar exercises (Past simple and continuous, past perfect and continuous, past with modals).

I Heart English 2



Exercise 1: Gap Fill (Mixed Tenses)

Complete the sentences with the correct form of the verb in brackets. Use **past simple, past continuous, past perfect simple, or past perfect continuous**.

1. While they _____ (watch) TV, the power _____ (go) out.
2. By the time we arrived at the station, the train _____ (already/leave).
3. She _____ (study) for hours before the exam started.
4. I _____ (meet) him for the first time at last year's conference.
5. He _____ (not/finish) his homework when his friend arrived.
6. They _____ (argue) all morning before deciding to cancel the trip.
7. When we _____ (arrive), they _____ (wait) for us for over an hour.
8. I _____ (hear) about the news just as I was leaving the office.
9. She _____ (already/read) the book, so she didn't want to see the movie.
10. The kids _____ (play) outside when it started to rain.

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice (Past Modals)

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Choose the correct past modal verb: **must have, might have, could have, can't have, should have, or would have.**

1. He _____ forgotten his keys; they're still on the table.
 - a) must have
 - b) can't have
 - c) might have
2. They _____ heard the announcement; otherwise, they would have waited.
 - a) must have
 - b) can't have
 - c) might have
3. She _____ studied more if she wanted to pass the exam.
 - a) could have
 - b) must have
 - c) should have
4. I _____ taken an umbrella; now I'm soaking wet.
 - a) might have
 - b) should have
 - c) must have

5. The lights are off; they _____ gone to bed.

- a) might have
- b) can't have
- c) should have

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6. He _____ been paying attention because he missed everything.

- a) might have
- b) can't have
- c) must have

7. You _____ warned her earlier about the deadline.

- a) must have
- b) could have
- c) should have

8. He _____ seen us because he didn't wave.

- a) might have
- b) can't have
- c) must have

9. They _____ been practicing a lot because their performance was flawless.

- a) might have
- b) must have
- c) should have

10. The book is missing; you _____ left it at school.

- a) could have
- b) must have
- c) can't have

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Exercise 3: Match the Sentence Halves

Match the two halves to create logical sentences:

1. The teacher was angry because...
2. She looked tired because...
3. By the time we got there...
4. He was surprised because...
5. The floor was wet because...
6. They were annoyed because...
7. I didn't recognize her because...
8. She failed the exam because...
9. We were late because...
10. The car broke down because...

- a) she hadn't studied enough.
- b) he hadn't seen us in years.
- c) they had been waiting for ages.
- d) the engine had overheated.
- e) the cleaning staff had been mopping it.
- f) she had been crying all night.
- g) he had forgotten about the meeting.
- h) she had completely changed her hairstyle.
- i) they had already left.
- j) we had missed the earlier bus.

Exercise 4: Rewrite the Sentences

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Rewrite the following sentences using **past perfect continuous**
or **past modals**:

1. She worked all night, so she was exhausted.

2. I didn't take an umbrella, so I got wet.

3. He waited for hours, so he was frustrated.

4. We left the party early, so we missed the surprise.

5. She didn't call me, so I was worried.

6. He ignored my advice, so he failed the exam.

7. I didn't practice enough, so I didn't perform well.

8. They forgot to book a table, so there were no seats.

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9. She studied very hard, so she passed the test.

10. They didn't bring sunscreen, so they got sunburned.

Exercise 5: Story Sequencing

Write the following events in the correct order using **past simple, past continuous, or past perfect tenses**:

1. They started the meeting.
2. I entered the conference room.
3. I realized I had forgotten my notes.
4. I went back to my office to get them.
5. By the time I returned, they had already discussed the main topic.

Exercise 6: Correct the Mistakes

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Identify and correct the errors in the following sentences:

1. They must had been studying late last night.

2. She was upset because he didn't called her.

3. By the time we arrives, they had been leaving.

4. He can't have leave his bag here; it's missing.

5. She had worked there for years when she quits her job.

Exercise 7: Complete the Story

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Complete the story using the correct form of the verbs in parentheses. Use **past simple**, **past continuous**, **past perfect simple**, or **past perfect continuous**.

Last Saturday, I (1) _____ (plan) to go hiking with some friends. By the time I (2) _____ (wake) up, it (3) _____ (already/start) raining heavily. While I (4) _____ (check) the weather forecast, my phone (5) _____ (ring). It was my friend Sarah, who (6) _____ (drive) to the meeting point when she (7) _____ (hear) on the radio that the trail was closed. We (8) _____ (decide) to cancel our plans. Instead, I (9) _____ (spend) the day reading a book that I (10) _____ (mean) to finish for months.

Exercise 8: True or False

Decide if the following statements are **True** or **False** based on the use of tenses.

Correct the false ones.

1. He had been waiting for the bus for an hour when it finally arrived.

2. They were upset because they didn't finish the project on time.

3. She was cooking dinner when her guests had arrived.

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4. By the time we got to the park, the event already ended.

5. I might have leave my wallet at the café.

6. The children were tired because they had been playing all afternoon.

7. She hadn't seen him in years before they met at the reunion.

8. I wasn't feeling well, so I might not attend the meeting.

9. He had worked there for five years when he was promoted.

10. They had already sold out of tickets by the time we arrived.

Exercise 9: Dialogue Completion

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Complete the dialogue using **past simple**, **past continuous**, **past perfect simple**, or **past perfect continuous**.

A: Did you hear what happened to Mark yesterday?

B: No, what?

A: Well, he (1) _____ (drive) to work when he (2) _____

(realize) that he (3) _____ (forget) his laptop at home.

B: Oh no! What did he do?

A: He (4) _____ (turn) around to get it, but by the time he (5)

_____ (arrive) back at home, his wife (6) _____

(already/leave) with the car.

B: That's awful!

A: Yes, and he (7) _____ (end) up missing an important meeting

because of it.

B: He must have been so frustrated!

A: He definitely was! He (8) _____ (try) to explain to his boss, but I

think his boss (9) _____ (already/make) up their mind about him

being late.

B: Poor Mark!

Exercise 10: Sentence Transformation

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Rewrite the following sentences to include **past perfect continuous** or **past modals**.

1. She studied for three hours before the test started.

2. They left before we could say goodbye.

3. I was disappointed because he didn't show up on time.

4. He had a headache because he worked on his computer all day.

5. By the time they arrived, the store was already closed.

6. She was relieved because they apologized.

7. I couldn't concentrate because the neighbours were making too much noise.

8. He failed the exam because he didn't prepare properly.

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9. They didn't notice the time, so they missed the last train.

10. By the time we called, she had already left the office.

Answers

Exercise 1: Gap Fill (Mixed Tenses)

1. were watching; went
2. had already left
3. had been studying
4. met
5. hadn't finished
6. had been arguing
7. arrived; had been waiting
8. heard
9. had already read
10. were playing

Exercise 2: Multiple Choice (Past Modals)

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1. **b)** can't have
2. **a)** must have
3. **c)** should have
4. **b)** should have
5. **a)** might have
6. **b)** can't have
7. **c)** should have
8. **b)** can't have
9. **b)** must have
10. **a)** could have

Exercise 3: Match the Sentence Halves

1. **g)** The teacher was angry because he had forgotten about the meeting.
2. **f)** She looked tired because she had been crying all night.
3. **i)** By the time we got there, they had already left.
4. **b)** He was surprised because he hadn't seen us in years.
5. **e)** The floor was wet because the cleaning staff had been mopping it.
6. **c)** They were annoyed because they had been waiting for ages.
7. **h)** I didn't recognize her because she had completely changed her hairstyle.
8. **a)** She failed the exam because she hadn't studied enough.
9. **j)** We were late because we had missed the earlier bus.
10. **d)** The car broke down because the engine had overheated.

Exercise 4: Rewrite the Sentences

1. She had been working all night, so she was exhausted.
2. I should have taken an umbrella, so I wouldn't have gotten wet.
3. He had been waiting for hours, so he was frustrated.

4. We left the party early, so we must have missed the surprise.
5. She didn't call me, so I might have been worried.
6. He ignored my advice, so he could have failed the exam.
7. I should have practiced more, so I would have performed better.
8. They forgot to book a table, so there might not have been any seats.
9. She had been studying very hard, so she passed the test.
10. They didn't bring sunscreen, so they got sunburned.

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Exercise 5: Story Sequencing

1. I entered the conference room.
2. I realized I had forgotten my notes.
3. I went back to my office to get them.
4. By the time I returned, they had already discussed the main topic.
5. They started the meeting.

Exercise 6: Correct the Mistakes

1. They must **have** been studying late last night.
2. She was upset because he didn't **call** her.
3. By the time we **arrived**, they had **already left**.
4. He can't have **left** his bag here; it's missing.
5. She had worked there for years when she **quit** her job.

Exercise 7: Complete the Story

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1. had planned
2. woke
3. had already started
4. was checking
5. rang
6. was driving
7. heard
8. decided
9. spent
10. had been meaning

Exercise 8: True or False

1. True
2. False – *They were upset because they hadn't finished the project on time.*
3. False – *She was cooking dinner when her guests arrived.*
4. False – *By the time we got to the park, the event had already ended.*
5. False – *I might have left my wallet at the café.*
6. True
7. True
8. False – *I wasn't feeling well, so I might not have attended the meeting.*
9. True
10. True

Exercise 9: Dialogue Completion

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1. was driving
2. realized
3. had forgotten
4. turned
5. arrived
6. had already left
7. ended
8. tried
9. had already made

Exercise 10: Sentence Transformation

1. She had been studying for three hours before the test started.
2. They had left before we could say goodbye.
3. I was disappointed because he hadn't shown up on time.
4. He had a headache because he had been working on his computer all day.
5. By the time they arrived, the store had already closed.
6. She was relieved because they had apologized.
7. I couldn't concentrate because the neighbours had been making too much noise.
8. He failed the exam because he hadn't prepared properly.
9. They hadn't noticed the time, so they missed the last train.
10. By the time we called, she had already left the office.